

CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings of claims in this application. The text of all pending claims (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims are listed below for the convenience of the Examiner. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented) or (not entered).

1. (Original) A method for making a telephone call connection, comprising:

receiving an incoming call at a computer in signal communication with a telephone being called by a caller, the telephone having an associated sign-up calling plan service billed to a home plan at a home plan rate;

prompting the caller with a first service announcement;

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that an outgoing call be made, prompting the caller to enter a personal identification number;

validating the personal identification number and prompting the caller with a second service announcement; and

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a long distance or international destination telephone number to be called, invoking an outbound call to the destination number, and in response to the destination number being answered, dropping the computer off line, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the invoking an outbound call comprises:

in response to the telephone being serviced by only one line, invoking a three-way call between the computer, the caller, and the destination telephone number.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the invoking an outbound call comprises:

in response to the telephone being serviced by more than one line, invoking an outbound call to the destination number on another line.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a plurality of conference call telephone numbers to be called, invoking a conference call between the computer, the caller, and each of the plurality of telephone numbers, and in response to the conference call connections being made or terminated, dropping the computer off line, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the plurality of telephone numbers via the home plan at the home plan rate.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and entering a call-forward command and a call-forward telephone number, redirecting all calls received at the computer to the call-forward telephone number.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

in response to the destination number being busy and in response to a prompt from the caller, activating a call-back service, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate in response to the destination number not being busy.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that the incoming call be answered, directing the incoming call to the telephone in signal communication with the computer.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the telephone is the caller's residence telephone.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the telephone is associated with the caller's place of business.

10. (Original) A computer program product for making a telephone call connection, the product comprising:

a storage medium, readable by a processing circuit, storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for:

receiving an incoming call directed to a telephone being called by a caller, the telephone having an associated sign-up calling plan service billed to a home plan at a home plan rate;

prompting the caller with a first service announcement;

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that an outgoing call be made, prompting the caller to enter a personal identification number;

validating the personal identification number and prompting the caller with a second service announcement; and

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a long distance or international destination telephone number to be called, invoking an outbound call to the destination number, and in response to the destination number being answered, disconnecting the processing circuit from the call, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate.

11. (Original) The product of Claim 10, wherein the a storage medium further stores instructions for execution by the processing circuit for:

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that the incoming call be answered, directing the incoming call to the telephone being called.

12. (Original) The product of Claim 10, wherein the a storage medium further stores instructions for execution by the processing circuit for:

invoking a three-way call between a computer, the caller, and the destination telephone number in response to the telephone being serviced by only one line, or invoking an outbound call to the destination number on another line in response to the telephone being serviced by more than one line.

13. (Original) The product of Claim 10, wherein the a storage medium further stores instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing at least one of:

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a plurality of conference call telephone numbers to be called, invoking a conference call between a computer, the caller, and each of the plurality of telephone numbers, and in response to the conference call connections being made or terminated, dropping the computer off line, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the plurality of telephone numbers via the home plan at the home plan rate;

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and entering a call-forward command and a call-forward telephone number, redirecting all incoming calls to the call-forward telephone number; and

in response to the destination number being busy and in response to a prompt from the caller, activating a call-back service, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate in response to the destination number not being busy.

14. (Original) A specialized computer in signal communication with a telephone and for making a telephone call connection, the computer comprising a processing circuit operable in response to executable instructions for:

receiving an incoming call directed to the telephone being called by a caller, the telephone having an associated sign-up calling plan service billed to a home plan at a home plan rate;

prompting the caller with a first service announcement;

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that an outgoing call be made, prompting the caller to enter a personal identification number;

validating the personal identification number and prompting the caller with a second service announcement; and

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a long distance or international destination telephone number to be called, invoking an outbound call to the destination number, and in response to the destination number being answered, disconnecting the computer from the call, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate.

15. (Original) The specialized computer of Claim 14, wherein the processing circuit is further operable in response to executable instructions for:

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and requesting that the incoming call be answered, directing the incoming call to the telephone being called.

16. (Original) The specialized computer of Claim 14, wherein the processing circuit is further operable in response to executable instructions for:

invoking a three-way call between the computer, the caller, and the destination telephone number in response to the telephone being serviced by only one line, or invoking an outbound call to the destination number on another line in response to the telephone being serviced by more than one line.

17. (Original) The specialized computer of Claim 14, wherein the processing circuit is further operable in response to executable instructions for performing at least one of:

in response to the caller replying to the second service announcement and entering a plurality of conference call telephone numbers to be called, invoking a conference call between the computer, the caller, and each of the plurality of telephone numbers, and in response to the conference call connections being made or terminated, dropping the computer off line, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the plurality of telephone numbers via the home plan at the home plan rate;

in response to the caller replying to the first service announcement and entering a call-forward command and a call-forward telephone number, redirecting all incoming calls to the call-forward telephone number; and

in response to the destination number being busy and in response to a prompt from the caller, activating a call-back service, thereby enabling the caller to communicate with the destination number via the home plan at the home plan rate in response to the destination number not being busy.